

European Cultural Convention: Promoting Cultural Cooperation in Europe

The European Cultural Convention was signed in Paris in December 1954.

One of the main aims of the Convention was to facilitate cultural cooperation in Europe by promoting the mobility and exchange of people as well as cultural goods (Article 4).

Country specific information on cultural cooperation is presented in the country profiles in chapters 3.4.1 – 3.4.6.

The Table below presents information on when each country signed the European Cultural Convention, government bodies responsible for supporting cultural cooperation, their membership bodies to promote regional cultural cooperation and reports on some recent trends.

Abbreviations:

Alps-Adria = Alps-Adriatic Working Community; BR = Branch institutes; BSEC = Black Sea Economic Co-operation; CEI = Central European Initiative; CF = Countries in focus; CoM-SEE = Council of Ministers of Culture in South East Europe; CoM-N = (Nordic) Council of Ministers; ICC = International cultural co-operation; Min. = Ministry; Platform CCE = Platform "Culture – Central Europe"; SR = Shared responsibility

Country	Date of ratification of the European Cultural Convention	Lead Ministry / Ministries in charge of cultural cooperation*	Bodies / agencies charged with promoting cultural relations	Membership in regional co-operation bodies relevant for culture	Recent priorities and trends
Albania	25/6/1992	Ministry of Tourism and Culture	Embassies	BSEC; CEI; Francophonie	Focus on cultural heritage and film production. CF: Neighbours (Greece, FYROM, Kosovo), France, Italy, Switzerland
Armenia	25/4/1997	SR Min. of Culture and Min. of Foreign Affairs	Embassies	BSEC, CIS, INCP	One of the priority directions of Armenia's cultural policy is the preservation and development of relations with Diaspora, which is carried out through cultural unions, NGOs and centers operating in Diaspora
Austria	4/3/1958	SR Federal Ministry for European and	30 "Culture Fora" (Kulturforen) in 27	Platform CCE; CEI; Alps-Adria, Francophonie	ICC influenced by debates about Europe and

		International Affairs + Department of Culture and Arts of the Austrian Chancellery	countries; KulturKontakt Austria	(observer status), EUNIC, International Network on Cultural Policy (INCP)	"European Values, intercultural dialogue and regional security issues." Regional Focus: Central / Eastern Europe, incl. Balkans. Cultural cooperation agreements with 25 countries.
Azerbaijan	25/4/1997	Ministry of Culture	Min. of Foreign Affairs, State Committee on Work with Azerbaijanis Living Abroad; Embassies	BSEC; GUAM (Georgia, UKR, AZ, MOL); TURKSOY; ISESCO (Islamic countries), CIS	Aims: To foster relations based on "mutual understanding and trust with other countries, work with them on the basis of mutual benefit and equal rights, and to give to the world a clear, objective picture" of Azerbaijan.
Belgium	11/5/1955	SR Flemish Min. of Culture and Min. of Foreign Affairs; General Commission for the International Relations of the French Community; Government of the German Speaking Community	Diplomatic representations of the Communities; some individual institutions, e.g. Academia Belgica (Rome); Wallonia-Brussels Centre; Flemish-Dutch and Flemish-Moroccan Houses (Brussels) or the Belgisches Haus (Cologne)	Taalunie (Flanders); Francophonie (Wallonie); Euregio Maas-Rhein; Grossregion Saar-Lor-Lux	ICC in Belgium has been transferred to regional Governments, which rotate in their participation in European/international bodies. Flanders: general application of envelope funding system (international budget embedded in general multi-annual grants); special focus on intercultural dialogue. CF: South Africa, Morocco, China and the French Community in Belgium. French Community: Key diplomatic representations in Paris, Geneva, Brussels

					and other cities. German-speaking Community: Focus on neighbouring countries/regions.
Bulgaria	2/9/1991	Min. of Culture (International Cultural Policy Directorate)	Bulgarian Cultural Institutes (BR: 10 countries); Embassies	BSEC; CEI; CoM-SEE; Francophonie	Main goal: Integration with the European Union. Regional focus: SE and Central Europe (incl. special activities for Bulgarian diaspora). 79 bilateral agreements / protocols.
Canada	Observer status	SR Departments of: Foreign Affairs and International Trade; Canadian Heritage	Embassies	Arctic Council; Francophonie	Development of international strategic framework to develop and implement thematic or geographic-based strategies in key action areas: addressing the cultural trade deficit by increasing exports; using new technology to ensure better visibility for Canadian content; strengthening relations with the United States; increasing focus on G8 and emerging global powers; and more coherence with overall Government international priorities.
Croatia	27/1/1993	Min. of Culture	Cultural Council for International Relations and European Integration; Embassies	CEI, Alps-Adria; COM-SEE, INCP, Quadriateral (Italy, Slovenia, Croatia, Hungary)	Focus on ICC within the region of South Eastern Europe (based mainly on direct contacts between artists and arts and cultural

					organizations).
Denmark	7/5/1955	SR Min. of Foreign Affairs; Min. of Cultural Affairs	The Danish Cultural Institute (BR: 10 countries); Danish Arts; Danish Center for Culture and Development; Embassies	Nordic CoM; Baltic Cooperation	CF: Asia (Bangladesh, China, Vietnam); Baltic States; Benelux; Germany; Hungary; Poland; Russia; UK
Estonia	7/5/1992	SR Min. of Culture; Min. of Foreign Affairs; Min. of Education and Research	Estonian Institute (BR: 4 countries); Tuglas Society; Embassies	Baltic Cooperation	CF: Finland and Scandinavian countries; the other Baltic states; Hungary.
Finland	23/1/1970	SR Min. of Foreign Affairs; Min. of Education and Culture	Finish Cultural Centres (in 16 countries); Embassies	Nordic CoM; the Barents Regional Council; the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS)	Cultural exports have become a major ICC policy issue. Nordic and Nordic-Baltic -cooperation is being renovated. Enhanced efforts for cultural co-operation with China and countries of South-East Asia.
France	5/5/1955	Min. of Foreign Affairs (Directorate General for International Cooperation and Development - DGCID); in some fields SR with Min. of Culture	Embassies and French Cultural Centres of DGCID; Alliance Française (BR in 131 countries – 2003); Association Française d'action artistique (AFAA)	Francophonie; Mediterranean Forum; Grande Region Saar-Lor-Lux	Advocacy role for cultural pluralism and diversity (incl. issues that are influenced by WTO, the EU and other bodies). The world-wide promotion of French language and culture and language training is seen as a contribution towards these goals. Important role of culture industries (e.g. cinema, music) and heritage.
Georgia	25/4/1997	Min. of Culture, Monuments Protection and Sports	International agreements between cities, regions and institutions (e.g.	BSEC; GUAM	International events, e.g. festivals. CF: Baltic states, GUAM Countries, Armenia,

			archeological sites)		Russia, Italy, Spain, Germany, Greece, France, Romania, Italy, Israel, UK, Poland, Bulgaria. Asia (Turkey, Japan, China, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan) USA
Germany	17/11/1955	Federal Foreign Office; in some fields, e.g. European co-operation, SR with Länder Governments; Fed. Chancellor's Office etc.	Goethe Institute (BR: 81 countries + additional information and learning centres, reading rooms etc.); Institut f. Auslandsbeziehungen (Ifa); Embassies; Local / Regional Bodies and NGOs	Baltic Cooperation, Alps-Adria	Major conferences were held to highlight a new political importance attributed to ICC (incl. language teaching) and to discuss future developments. The now higher place on political agendas was underlined by increases in the federal budget. Regional focus: EU countries; Asia (China, India); Eastern and Central Europe; Middle East
Greece	10/1/1962	Ministry of Culture	Hellenic Foundation for Culture (BR in 4 countries, inc. Egypt); Embassies	BSEC; Mediterranean Forum; Francophonie	Emergence of new forms of ICC, e.g. the gradual devolution of responsibilities from the state to arms-length organisations and an increased diversity of co-operation or funding opportunities (notably from the EU). Focus on heritage.
Hungary	16/11/1989	SR Min. of Education and Culture; Min. of Foreign Affairs	Hungarian Cultural Centres (BR in 18 countries); Embassies; Balassi Institute	CEI; Platform CCE; Alps-Adria; Višegrad Group; Quadrilateral	Organising Hungarian seasons – artistic events abroad is a priority.

					Hungary has bilateral agreements with 105 countries, 50 of which are active.
Ireland	5/5/1955	Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), with some influences of other Ministries	Culture Ireland; Arts Council Ireland; Embassies; Centre Culturel Irlandais (Paris)	Anglo-Irish co-operation treaties	Strategic objective of DFA: "to promote Ireland through culture, with a view to the enhancement of Ireland's image and reputation abroad". Establishment in 2005 of Culture Ireland, the national agency to promote Irish arts and artists overseas.
Italy	16/5/1957	SR Min. of Foreign Affairs; Min. for Heritage and Cultural Activities; regional bodies	Istituto Italiano di Cultura (BR in 60 countries); Società Dante Alighieri (3.300 BR); Embassies	Mediterranean Forum; CEI; Alps-Adria; Quadrilateral	Since the early 2000's, trend towards a "fragmentation into a variety of institutional actors" in ICC, including the Regions. Shift of balance from Europe to other world regions and away from bilateral agreements to direct co-operation. Among the priorities: Heritage and cultural tourism; "Italian Years"; language training.
Latvia	7/5/1992	Min. of Culture	Embassies, The Latvian Institute	Baltic Assembly, Baltic Council of Ministers, Union of the Baltic Cities Council of the Baltic Sea States, cooperation of Baltic and Nordic states.	"The Cultural Policy Guidelines 2006 – 2015" set the vision for the development of Latvian international co-operation as being: 1) sustainable cultural exchange, based

					on co-operation projects and co-productions, thus furthering the professionalism of cultural operators, and encouraging creativity and excellence in all cultural branches; 2) increasing recognition and competitiveness of Latvian cultural products; 3) Latvia actively participating in and contributing to the cultural processes in the EU and the wider international community. In order to achieve a better coordination of international cultural cooperation on the state level interministerial council of foreign cultural policy was established.
Liechtenstein	13/6/1979	Government (Department of Culture)	-	Regional Conferences with A, CH, D	CF: Austria; Switzerland, Germany
Lithuania	7/5/1992	SR Min. of Foreign Affairs; Min. of Culture	The Lithuanian Institute; Embassies	Baltic Cooperation	CF: Baltic sea countries; Russia (Kaliningrad region). Important émigré centres in the West.
FYROM / Macedonia	24/11/1995	SR Min. of Culture; Min. of Foreign Affairs	Embassies	CEI; Francophonie	Bilateral cultural co-operation agreements are still a major instrument for ICC. The appointment of recognised artists, writers etc., as "cultural ambassadors" abroad is

					announced by the government. "Macedonian Diaspora" as a new priority.
Malta	12/12/1966	SR Min. of Education; Min. of Tourism and Culture	Malta Council for Culture and the Arts; Heritage Malta	Mediterranean Forum	Main ICC developments and strategies, attached to EU programmes. Important cultural tourism. CF: Italy; anglophone countries (large diaspora!); Lybia.
Moldova	25/4/1994	Min. of Culture and Tourism (Directorate of International Relations and European Harmonisation); Min. of Foreign Affairs; Min of Education and Youth	Embassies, Cultural Institute "Dimitrie Cantemir", State Company "Impresarios Agency"	BSEC; CEI; Francophonie; GUAM	Main priorities in the field of ICC: 1) developing Moldovan involvement in international projects, initiated by the Council of Europe, European Union and UNESCO; 2) promoting the cultural image of the country through participation of artistic groups at cultural events abroad; and 3) promoting cultural tourism at the international level. CF: Romania; other Black Sea countries
Monaco	6/7/1994	Direction des Affaires Culturelles of Monaco	Embassies / Consulates	Francophonie	Support of tours of arts institutions (ballet; orchestra). CF: France; Russia; Panama
Netherlands	8/2/1956	SR Min. of Foreign Affairs; Min. of Education, Culture and Science	Service Centre for International Cultural Activities (SICA); Netherlands Culture Fund; Embassies; Institut Néerlandais (Paris); the	Taalunie; co-operation in border regions	State documents and policies suggest a "return to the notion of the importance of profiling Dutch culture abroad" (in addition to dialogue-

			Flemish-Dutch House (Brussels) etc.		oriented goals). CF: EU member states, Russia, the USA, Canada, Japan, Turkey, Morocco, Egypt, Surinam, South Africa, Indonesia. NL as an ICC "hub" for the whole of Europe (NGO, Europ. Cultural Foundation etc.)
Norway	24/1/1956	SR Min. of Foreign Affairs; Min. of Culture and Church Affairs	Embassies; Office for Contemporary Art Norway (OCA); Music Information Centre Norway (MIC); NORLA – Norwegian Literature Abroad; Norwegian Film Institute (NFI); etc.	Nordic CoM; Barents Regional Council; Baltic Cooperation	Main fields: Artistic exchanges and promotion of Norwegian artists and works of art; Culture as a core component of intra-Nordic cooperation; Cultural diversity and globalisation issues
Poland	16/11/1989	SR Min. of Culture and National Heritage; Min. of Foreign Affairs	Instytut Polski (BR: 16 countries); Adam Mickiewicz Institute; International Cultural Centre; Embassies; Polish Information and Foreign Investments Agency; The Permanent Conference of Museums, Archives and Polish Libraries in the West; Gaude Polonia; Borderland Foundation...	CEI; Baltic Cooperation; Platform CCE; Višegrad Group	Polish ICC is shaped by its specific geographical location, by economic and political interests as well as by the role of a large "Polish Diaspora". CF: Belgium, Austria, France, Germany and other member states of the EU; USA; Israel ("Jewish Diaspora"); the Baltic Region and countries on Polands Eastern border (Ukraine, Russia, Belarus, the latter via non-governmental bodies), despite "a visible set-back in former East-East relations". State bilateral

					cooperation is gradually replaced by activities of European institutions and artistic or NGO initiatives.
Portugal	16/2/1976	Min. of Foreign Affairs	Office of International Cultural Relations; Instituto Camões (BR in 17 countries); Embassies	Mediterranean Forum; Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries – CPLP; OEI (see Spain)	Main focus: 1) co-operation with communities and countries whose official language is Portuguese; 2) dissemination of the Portuguese language, also via media programmes and Internet; 3) dissemination of Portuguese works of creative art abroad; 4) organisation of major cultural events.
Romania	19/12/1991	SR Min. of Culture and Religious Affairs;	Romanian Cultural Institutes	BSEC; CEI; Francophonie	Romania's "Brand Image" and the development of "Creative Industries" are in the focus of ICC. CF: European Union member states and the neighbouring countries of SEE and the Black Sea Region. Special attention for the needs and expectations of Romanian communities living abroad
Russia	21/2/1991	SR Min. of Foreign Affairs; Min. of Culture and Mass Communications	Russian Centre for International Scientific and Cultural Cooperation; Russian Cultural Institutes, Embassies	Baltic Cooperation; Barents Regional Cooperation; BSEC; Nordic Council; Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS); the Shanghai Co-operation Organisation	Strengthening the cultural component in international relations; Bilateral exchange agreements with many countries all over the world; Development of cultural relations in the CIS

				and other	member states; Strengthening heritage policies and traditions of intercultural dialogue in cross-border co-operation: Deeper involvement into cultural collaboration within the regional cooperation bodies.
San Marino	13/2/1986	Congress of State (Government) with SR of different Ministries	-Embassies and Consulates ; -Dante Alighieri Association -Alliance Française Institute -Nua Association (New Contemporary Art and Research) -Communities of San Marino Citizens abroad	-	Emphasis on heritage issues. CF: Mainly Italy, but also France, Russia, China, Romania, and others.
Serbia	28/2/2001	Min. of Culture	Cities (e.g. Belgrade; Novi Sad)	BSEC; CEI	European integration as the ultimate political goal influences ICC, with increased role of local authorities and NGO. Regional partnerships and Serbian diaspora activities gain importance, while other ICC policy instruments are still in a development stage.
Slovakia	1/1/1993	Min. of Culture (cooperation with Min. of Foreign Affairs)	Embassies, Slovak Institutes	CEI, Visegrad Group	International presentation of Slovak culture, European Capital of Culture 2013 (Košice - regional capital of Eastern Slovakia), European Year of Intercultural Dialogue 2008, diversity of cultural

					expressions (UNESCO Convention), EU cultural programmes (Culture 2000, MEDIA), financial support of international cultural cooperation (projects and activities), protection, presentation and digitisation of cultural heritage, interoperability of cultural databases, connecting of Europeana and other data networks.
Slovenia	2/7/1992	SR Min. of Foreign Affairs; Min. of Culture	Embassies; Artists' Studios (Paris, N.Y., Berlin); Office for Slovenes Abroad	CEI; Platform CCE; Alps-Adria; Quadrilateral	Accession to the EU increasingly influences ICC in Slovenia. Official cooperation agreements mainly with non-European countries and those with "different political systems" (e.g. Russia; China). CF: Central European and Adriatic countries. Many theatre exchanges; important role of NGO.
Spain	4/7/1957	SR Min. of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation; Min. of Culture	Instituto Cervantes (BR in 45 countries); Embassies; State Corporation for Spanish Cultural Action Abroad (SEACEX), Carolina Foundation (Latin America) and other agencies; some bodies of the Regions	Mediterranean Forum; Organisation of Iberoamerican States (OEI – with Conferences of the Ministers of Culture); Andrés Bello Agreement; Eurorégion Culturelle	Bilateral exchange agreements still important basis for cultural exchanges. Focus on artistic exchanges, language teaching and co-operation programmes with countries in Latin America, the Arab countries (Morocco, in

					particular), Africa and some Asian countries. International promotion of trade, language and tourism, also by some of the Regions (e.g. COPEC in Catalonia).
Sweden	16/6/1958	Min. for Foreign Affairs	Svenska Institutet (BR in Paris); Embassies; Nat. Council for Cultural Affairs; Swedish Internat. Development Authority (SIDA); Internat. Artists Studio Programme (IASPIS); other agencies	Nordic CoM; Barents Regional Cooperation; Baltic Cooperation	"Cultural Policies for Development" concepts, with close links to local life, culture, and the environment, shape ICC and lead to programmes e.g. in Africa, the Mediterranean and Eastern Europe. A strong tradition of Nordic cooperation is complemented by better relations with the whole Baltic region (e.g. in "Ars Baltica" exchanges).
Switzerland	13/7/1962	SR Federal Department of Foreign Affairs; Federal Office of Cultural Affairs; regional bodies	Pro Helvetia, Embassies (Kulturkompetenzzentrum CCC)	Alps-Adria; Francophonie	Pro Helvetia supports dialogue-oriented programmes (e.g. in the Balkans). Cantons are responsible for cross-border cooperation. Since 2006 partner in the MEDIA-programme of the EU and Interreg-Programs.
Ukraine	13/6/1994	SR Min. of Culture and Tourism; Min. of Foreign Affairs	Embassies, culture centres	BSEC; CEI; GUAM	Main goal is "to ensure Ukraine's proactive cultural representation in the international area", with emphasis on the Black sea

					area and the Balkans, active participation in CoE and EU culture programmes. Focus on festivals, large events, diaspora; increased NGO activities.
United Kingdom	5/5/1955	SR Foreign & Commonwealth Office; Departments for Culture, Media and Sport and for International Development; regional bodies	British Council (BR in 109 countries and territories); Arts Councils; BBC World Service, etc.	Anglo-Irish co-operation treaties; Commonwealth (not active in ICC)	Decentralisation of ICC (Scotland and Northern Ireland particularly active); increasing role for NGO and UK participation in international networks. "Increasing the Mobility of Collections" initiative (with EU); Cultural management training in many parts of Europe and the World; "Culture-in-development" programmes. Important role of culture industries.

Source: Compendium of Cultural Policies and Trends in Europe, 19th edition, 2018.